Claims:

What is claimed is:

5 1.   A conversation manager for managing the flow of messages in a collaboration system, comprising:

a conversation initiation mechanism for initiating a conversation;

a participation registration mechanism for registering participants in a conversation; and,

10   a conversation repository for storing conversation management data.

2.   The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein the conversation manager controls the flow of conversation between the participants.

15 3.   The conversation manager of claim 2 wherein the conversation includes a plurality of messages passed between two or more participants.

4.   The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein the conversation manager controls a publish/subscribe service for accepting messages and

20 sending messages to and from participants.

5.   The conversation manager of claim 4 wherein a registered participant may send messages to the publish/subscribe service for distribution to one or more participants.

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6.   The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein a conversation is initiated by an initiator participant authorized to initiate conversations.

7.   The conversation manager of claim 5 wherein the conversation repository includes instructions for the distribution of messages sent via the publish/subscribe service to the participants.

8.   The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein a conversation may be terminated by a terminator participant authorized to terminate conversations.

9.   The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein a conversation may be aborted by the conversation manager.

10.   The conversation manager of claim 8 wherein a participant in an aborted conversation may be compensated for automatically by a substitute participant.

11.   A method for managing conversations in a collaboration system, comprising the steps of:
    initiating a conversation;
    registering participants in a conversation; and,
    storing conversation management data in a conversation repository.

12.   The method of claim 11 including controlling the flow of conversation between the participants.

13.   The method of claim 12 wherein the conversation includes a plurality of messages passed between two or more participants.

14.   The method of claim 11 including controlling a publish/subscribe service for accepting messages and sending messages to and from participants.

15.   The method of claim 14 including sending a message from a registered participant to the publish/subscribe service for distribution to one or more participants.

16.   The method of claim 11 including initiating a conversation by an initiator participant authorized to initiate conversations.

17.   The method of claim 15 including storing in the conversation repository instructions for the distribution of messages sent via the publish/subscribe service to the participants.

18.   The method of claim 11 including terminating a conversation by a terminator participant authorized to terminate conversations.

19.   The method of claim 11 including aborting a conversation may be aborted by the conversation manager.

20.   The method of claim 18 including compensating automatically for an aborted conversation participant by using a substitute participant.